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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 04/18/07

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  - 5) Prime Minister Abe's schedule for Golden Week overseas trip is set
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- 6) China criticizes LDP's policy chief Shoichi Nakagawa for recent remark
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- Nagasaki shooting:
- 9) Nagasaki mayor shot and seriously wounded by rightist
  - 10) Politicians fear Nagasaki election-campaign shooting may be a threat to democracy
  - 11) Ruling and opposition camps angry about shooting of Nagasaki mayor
  - 12) Defense Minister Kyuma wants substitute candidate system in case main candidate suddenly indisposed

Political agenda:

13) Election for local mayors and assemblies proclaimed  
14) Farm ministry's quarantine inspectors wined and dined abroad by local agricultural associations  
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16) Seamen involved in Aegis information leak lied about not having personal computers at home

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17) Japan, US to increase cooperation on global warming countermeasures

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19) In final speech, IBM executive who is stepping down as head of Keizai Doyukai promotes continued regulatory reform

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1) TOP HEADLINES

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Nagasaki mayor shot twice by mobster in front of his office and in grave condition; Mobster arrested

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Major companies to make good use of workers age 60 or above with Fanuc raising the retirement age to 65 and Toyota beginning a less-than-five-day work week system

2) EDITORIALS

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- (1) Nagasaki mayor shot: Deplorable terrorism
- (2) Gun rampage in US: Stricter gun control needed

Mainichi:

- (1) Nagasaki mayor shot: Violence unforgivable
- (2) Random shooting at US university: Fresh approach needed for gun control

Yomiuri:

- (1) Shooting of Nagasaki mayor: Terrorism during election campaign
- (2) Slush fund scandal involving Senshu University's Kitakami Senior High School: Japan Senior High School Baseball Federation responsible

Nihon Keizai:

- (1) Full-fledged debate needed for realization of comprehensive exchange
- (2) Reform the IMF and World Bank

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Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) Job-placement office: Who is responsible for safety net?
- (2) High school baseball: Don't turn away from the scandals

Akahata:

Nagasaki mayor shot: We denounce terrorism that occurred amid policy debates

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, April 17

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

08:20

Met Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shimomura at Kantei.

09:02

Attended a cabinet meeting. Foreign Minister Aso stayed on. Met afterward Finance Minister Omi.

10:04

Met at Kantei with Ambassador to the US Kato, followed by Deputy Foreign Minister Kono.

11:04

Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Shiozaki, followed by Education Minister Ibuki and others.

12:01

Met Shimomura.

13:15

Attended a Lower House plenary session.

16:58

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Gave an interview at Kantei to Newsweek, followed by The Wall Street Journal.

17:57

Attended a Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy meeting. Japan Business Federation Chairman Mitarai stayed on.

19:37

Returned to his official residence.

4) Prime Minister Abe sends a letter of sympathy to US President Bush over gun rampage

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

Prime Minister Abe yesterday sent a letter of sympathy to President Bush over the gun rampage at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Abe told reporters: "I offered my sincere prayer for the many innocent young victims. I feel strong indignation when I consider the sorrow of the relatives of the victims."

5) Prime minister to make tour of US, Middle East during Golden Week holidays, including visit to air base in Kuwait to encourage ASDF troops

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

The government announced yesterday the itinerary for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's planned trip to the United States and the Middle East.

The prime minister will leave Haneda Airport by a government plane on the morning of April 26. On the night of the 27th, Japan time, he will meet with President Bush at Camp David outside Washington. The two leaders are expected to confirm the importance of strengthening the Japan-US alliance and to discuss North Korea's nuclear and abduction issues, the situation in the Middle East, and other issues.

The prime minister will leave the US on the morning of April 28, Japan time, for five Middle Eastern countries. He will discuss the Middle East peace process and engage in summit diplomacy focusing on oil resources.

Prime Minister Abe will meet King Abdullah early on April 29 in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and President Khalifa that night in Abud Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. On the afternoon of the 30th, he will meet with Prime Minister Muhammad in Dubai. That night, he will meet Prime Minister Nasir and others in Kuwait.

On the afternoon of May 1, the prime minister will visit the air

base in which about 200 Air Self-Defense Force troops have been stationed on an Iraq reconstruction mission to encourage them. Later, he will leave for Doha, the capital of Qatar to meet President Hamad. On the night of the 2nd, he will meet President Mubarak in Cairo, the capital of Egypt. He is scheduled to return home on the afternoon of the 3rd.

6) China rebuts Nakagawa

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NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

In reaction to Liberal Democratic Party Policy Research Council Chairman Shoichi Nakagawa's description of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Japan as "senseless," Chinese Foreign Ministry press officer Liu Chienchao said in a press conference yesterday: "Both Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Premier Wen are top leaders of the two governments. (Wen's visit to Japan) was appropriate in view of diplomatic protocol."

7) LDP lawmakers criticize China's words as lip service

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

The Liberal Democratic Party held foreign affairs joint conference yesterday in which the agreement reached earlier between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao was criticized, many raising questions about substance behind those words.

For instance, Katsuei Hirasawa said: "Premier Wen said China will cooperate on the abduction issue, but how would they do so specifically? That might be just his lip service." Yoshiaki Harada criticized China's moves regarding the development of gas fields in the East China Sea, saying: "Can we really afford to feel happy that the ice has melted?" Another attendant noted: "We must also push ahead with our test drilling to counter China."

8) Japanese and Russian chief negotiators on six-party talks confirm cooperation

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

Foreign Ministry Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Kenichiro Sasae, Japan's chief envoy to the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear programs, met yesterday with visiting Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Losyukov. In the meeting, they agreed that to urge North Korea to implement the first steps to abandon its nuclear weapons as early as possible. After the meeting, Losyukov told reporters: "What is important is not a timetable for future talks, but how we push forward with the situation. Setting a new target date for the implementation is not constructive."

9) Nagasaki mayor shot twice in front of election campaign office, now in critical condition; Gangster held

ASAHI (Top play) (Excerpts)  
April 18, 2007

Nagasaki Mayor Itcho Ito, 61, was shot twice at around 7:50 p.m. yesterday from the back by an ambushed gunman in front of his election campaign office in Daikokucho in the city near JR Nagasaki Station. Immediately after being shot, Ito was taken to the Nagasaki University Hospital of Medicine and Dentistry to be placed intensive care. But he was in cardiorespiratory arrest and in a critical condition, according to hospital sources.

Commentary

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Ito was attacked in front of his office in the midst of election campaigning. He was deprived of his freedom of speech, a basic democratic right, by physical violence before the voters made their decision. The incident is a threat to Japanese politics.

Although many politicians have been attacked in the postwar period, an attack on a candidate in election campaigning has been extremely rare. In 1960, Inejiro Asanuma, chairman of the then Japan Socialist Party, was stabbed to death while delivering a speech before election campaigning kicked off. The attack on Ito is as shocking as the Asanuma incident.

That is because Ito was attacked during his election campaigning, a period any candidate's political activities to publicize his or her policies and political beliefs must be guaranteed to the maximum. In 1990, then Nagasaki Mayor Hitoshi Motoshima was also shot due to his political standpoint. Although this time, the gunman did not mean to attack Ito's political standpoint per se, what he did is undoubtedly regarded as a threat to political campaigning that must be guaranteed under any circumstances.

This is the second time the Nagasaki mayor has been attacked. The rise of a trend to give in to violence, such as people's reluctance to run in mayoral races, would be a failure of democracy. In order to prevent such a trend from arising, lawmakers and the public must take resolute stances.

The attack on Ito is not a mere attempted murder. How are the political parties and lawmakers going to behave by taking this incident as a threat to democracy? We, voters, must keep a close watch on them.

10) Nagasaki mayor shot: Gangland syndicates hunting for local stakes

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Abridged)  
April 18, 2007

Nagasaki Mayor Itcho Itoh, 61, was shot by a gangster. The incident has rocked the government. The hitman was a high-ranking gangster, so the National Police Agency, which has been focusing on measures against organized crimes, directed the Nagasaki Prefectural Police Headquarters to investigate the shooting in a thoroughgoing way. However, experts are calling for new legislation against the underworld.

Democracy undermined

The attack seriously shocked government officials and lawmakers in the ruling and opposition parties. "It's an act that undermines democracy," one of them said. In the past, there have been terrorist incidents that targeted politicians. In the incident this time, however, a candidate campaigning for a mayoral election was attacked. All the more because of how unusual it was, politicians were also greatly shocked.

Prime Minister Abe received a report from his secretary last evening on the shooting and said he wanted investigative authorities to conduct a strict investigation. Chief Cabinet Secretary Shiozaki also said violence against public officials was absolutely impermissible.

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In the past, there have been terrorist incidents that targeted politicians. In 1960, Inejiro Asanuma, the then chairman of the Japan Socialist Party, was stabbed to death. In 1990, Hitoshi Motojima, the then mayor of Nagasaki City, was shot. In 1992, a right-wing group member fired a gun at Shin Kanemaru, the then vice president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Among recent cases, the home of former LDP Secretary General Koichi Kato's parents was burned down by a member of a right-wing group. Prosecutors stated that the rightist committed the crime after reading Kato's remarks about Japan-China relations and Yasukuni

Shrine. "The mayor was shot in the midst of political activities," Kato said yesterday, adding: "This kind of incident must not happen ever again. We must not have a world in which we abstain from engaging in political activities or refraining from saying things."

The mayor was shot when he was campaigning for the mayoral election. LDP Secretary General Nakagawa commented: "There must not be any attempts to assassinate someone who holds different political position. We will resolutely defend the freedom of political thought and oppose such violence."

Defense Minister Kyuma, who is elected from Nagasaki, told reporters: "It's totally unfathomable that a terrorist incident would occur in the midst of election campaigning. It's really tragic."

11) "Challenge to democracy," senior members of ruling and opposition parties say with anger

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
April 18, 2007

Former Secretary General Koichi Kato of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), whose office in his hometown was torched by a right-wing group member last August, yesterday spoke to reporters in the Diet about the shooting of Nagasaki Mayor Itcho Ito: "It is a dark incident. We must not allow any cases of politicians in the midst of campaigning being unable to express their views due to such violence." Based on his experience, Kato expressed concern: "This case must not lead to people refraining from speaking in the wake of this incident. The people need to share the perception that the threat of violence should not stop them from speaking out; otherwise this kind of incident will continue."

"We defend our political credo"

The shooting incident involving the Nagasaki mayor greatly shocked political circles. Leaders of the ruling and opposition parties expressed anger, taking the incident as a crisis in a democratic society with a politician being shot in the midst of campaigning.

Late yesterday at 8:03 p.m., Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was informed by his secretary of the incident. Afterwards, he issued this statement: "I hope authorities will rigorously investigate this case, and that the truth will be made clear." Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki made this comment: "Whatever reasons

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there may be, it's a cowardly act to use violence toward a person in public office. We simply can't tolerate it."

LDP Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa denounced the shooting: "I was shocked. An act of gunning down the person with a different

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political stance must not occur. We must defend freedom of political belief and oppose this kind of violence.

The junior coalition New Komeito's Policy Research Council Chairman Tetsuo Saito said in a press interview: "I was shocked. We don't know what the shooter was trying to say by using violence, but his act was no more than a challenge to democracy. It was an impermissible act of violence."

The opposition Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ or Minshuto) Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama said: "I have no words to express

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my feelings about it. We simply can't allow any act of violence, particularly using a gun. We must not allow Japan to become a country where people casually carry guns. It's politicians' responsibility to take every possible measure in order to eliminate this kind of incident."

The opposition Japanese Communist Party's (JCP) Chairman Kazuo Shii stressed the need to take preventive measures, noting: "I'm in a

furious rage at the person who took such a violent act. This cowardly act of terror is taken as a most ferocious attack against our country's freedom and democracy. We simply can't allow it."

12) Defense Minister Kyuma refers to fielding new candidate in Nagasaki mayoral election, saying, "We must be prepared for the worst"

ASAHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
April 18, 2007

Hearing the news that Nagasaki Mayor Itcho Ito was shot last night, Defense Minister Kyuma (Lower House member elected in Nagasaki No. 2 constituency), who is on good terms with Ito, told reporters, "I am very worried about his condition." He added:

"We must be prepared for the worst, but there seem to be defects in the relevant law. If a candidate should die three days before the voting date, fielding a new candidate is possible, but after that, we cannot do that. In such a case, since the election will be a one-on-one fight between the candidate endorsed by the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and other two independent candidates, the JCP-backed candidate will undoubtedly be elected. The government must prepare thorough legal measures."

Though Kyuma pointed out legal problems, his remark is likely to be criticized as imprudent.

In the Nagasaki mayoral election on April 22, three other candidates - two independents and one from the JCP, apart from Ito - are running.

According to the election department of the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry, under the Public Office Election Law, if one of more than two candidates in a mayoral election shall die within three days before the election date, the political party concerned is allowed to field a new candidate, with no limit on the number of candidates. In a case where one of only two candidates shall die, the voting date is deferred by five days and the party concerned is allowed to field new candidates up to three days before the reset voting date.

13) Campaigning starts for 156 mayoral elections, as well as for

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assembly elections in 448 towns and villages

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

The official campaigning for mayoral elections in 156 towns and villages and assembly elections in 448 towns and villages kicked off yesterday. A total of 270 persons filed their candidacies for the mayoral elections. In the 156 towns and villages, 60 new unchallenged mayors were elected without going through voting. The percentage of the uncontested elections was 38%, a drop of 13 points from the 2003 unified regional elections. Only four women filed candidacies in the 156 mayoral races. The elections will take place on April 22 along with city mayoral and assembly elections. In some wards and cities, the counting of votes will be conducted on April 23.

The number of mayoral elections is about 30% of that of the previous unified local elections and the number of assembly elections is about 40% of the 2003 unified regional races. The reason for the drops in the numbers of elections is the reduction in the number of posts through municipal mergers.

It is now definite that the mayoral election in Toyo Town, Kochi Prefecture, which applied for the first time across the nation to be the candidate site for the construction of a high-level radioactive waste disposal facility, is going to be a fierce fight between the former town mayor, who made the decision to apply, and a new-face candidate, who opposes it.

A total of 6,544 candidates are running for the 5,627 seats in the

448 assemblies. Of the 6,544, 732 candidates were elected unopposed.

14) MAFF plant protection officers received excessive entertainment from Australian farm group

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
April 18, 2007

It was found yesterday that the plant protection officers dispatched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) to check to see if proper measures have been taken to exterminate insects received excessive entertainment from a local farm group. The revelation may undermine the confidence of Japan's plant quarantine.

According to MAFF, Mediterranean fruit flies and other harmful insects are prevalent in Australia. To prevent such insects from being brought into Japan, the government has banned the import of oranges, kiwis, apples, and other fruits from Australia in principle. But it has made exceptions and permitted imports if it finds measures to kill insects at a low temperature have been properly taken. The ministry has sent several plant protection officials to Queensland during the season of shipment time for fruits every year.

According to accounting data of a local agricultural group and informed sources, two officials who were dispatched for six months starting last June were flooded with invitations, including tours of Ayers Rock and Tasmania, as well as wining and dining at Japanese restaurants in Melbourne on weekends. The local farm group

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reportedly spent about 580,000 for wining and dining and about 580,000 yen for trips for the two officials.

15) Full-scale debate begins on three education-related bills

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
April 18, 2007

With the attendance of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a question-and-answer session took place yesterday in a plenary session of the House of Representatives on three government-proposed bills related to education reform, which Abe regards as key pieces of legislation, and a debate on the bills began. Meanwhile, the largest opposition party, Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), yesterday submitted its own legislation to the Diet. The government-drafted bills are aimed at a review of the school management system in response to bullying, while the Minshuto-proposed bill calls for decentralization and budget expansion. With an eye on the summer's House of Councillors election, the ruling and opposition camps will engage in an education debate.

In the question-and-answer session, Abe expressed his enthusiasm for education reform based on the revised Basic Education Law. He stated: "We will make clear in law standard awareness, public mindedness, and love of one's hometown and country so that specific measures will be come up with after revising the curriculum guidelines."

One of the contentious points is the establishment of a system for renewal of teaching licenses, which the bills presented by the government and Minshuto include. The government's legislation calls for 10-year-validity of teaching licenses, as well as for teachers to attend 30 hours of lectures. In order to "strictly deal with inappropriate teachers" as Abe said, the bill also stipulates implementation of special training and punishments, including dismissal in cases where no improvement is seen.

Minshuto's bill calls for teachers to attend 100 hours of lectures and to obtain a master's degree that includes practice teaching for one year. The purpose of the stricter requirements for a teaching license is to avoid criticism that the party is favoring the teachers' union. Takeshi Nishioka, former education minister, said,



"Improvement in the development of teachers is more important than renewing teaching licenses."

16) Aegis info leak: 2 seamen lied to in-house inquiry about their own PCs

YOMIURI (Page 34) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

In the recently exposed case of Aegis vessel data leakage, two senior officers of the Maritime Self-Defense Force have made a false statement of personal computers in their possession when the MSDF conducted an in-house inquiry in the spring of last year, sources have revealed. In this information leakage case, a 33-year-old petty officer second class assigned to the MSDF's Escort Flotilla 1, headquartered in Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, is alleged to have taken out Aegis vessel data given by a 30-year-old petty officer third class. The two petty officers said to the inquiry that they did not have any personal computers. At that time, the MSDF checked

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personal computers privately owned by all its members to see what was contained in their hardware. However, the two MSDF seamen made a false statement to get around the PC check. Kanagawa prefectural police and the MSDF's shore police command is looking closely into the case, surmising that the two might have falsified the facts about their own PCs so that their concealing of classified information would not be brought to light.

In February last year, confidential information about an MSDF destroyer based at Sasebo in Nagasaki Prefecture was found to have leaked on the Internet from a crewman's privately owned computer. The Defense Ministry thereafter issued a notification to its personnel in the name of its vice minister in order to sweep away their PCs from workplaces and delete official data saved in their PCs.

In addition, the MSDF took further information security steps inquiring of all its members whether they had a PC for their private use. Those who owned a PC were subject to PC inspections. Their respective officers in charge directly went over to their homes or elsewhere to check saved data with their consent. In that check, the MSDF had them delete all official data.

In the recent Aegis data leakage case, however, a hard disk drive seized from the petty officer second class' home was discovered to have contained files, including data about Aegis vessels. The police and MSDF authorities therefore looked into the case. As a result, the two petty officers were found to have falsified their statements, saying they did not have any PCs. The investigative authorities are looking closely into the case as they suspect that the two petty officers made such false statements because they were aware of having Aegis data files and other confidential information that should not be in their hands.

17) Japan, US to confirm cooperation on global warming preventive measures during summit later in the month

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 3) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is to visit the US on Apr. 26-27, and President Bush will likely confirm cooperation on energy security and measures to prevent global warming during a bilateral summit meeting, a senior US government official revealed. Both countries are expected to urge China and India, major greenhouse gas emitters, to fulfill their roles in the creation of an international framework for global warming preventive measures replacing the Kyoto Protocol.

The two leaders will also likely reach a common perception on the efficacy of the role of nuclear power generation in fighting global warming. The same official stressed that it is extremely important for the leaders of Japan and the US to agree on their determination to bring a successful end to the multilateral trade talks (Doha Round) under the World Trade Organization. The US plans to bring up

liberalization of Japan's financial capital market in pursuit of fair treatment of US companies following postal privatization. Expansion of US beef trade has also surfaced as a matter of concern for the US.

18) METI, Environment Ministry at odds over environment tax at meeting of joint deliberation council to discuss global warming

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measures

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Environment Ministry yesterday held joint deliberations to discuss how to address Japan's target of cutting global warming gas emissions set under the Kyoto Protocol. Additional measures were released during the meeting. Additional proposals included strengthening measures targeting the household sector and the services sector, whose carbon emissions are on the increase. Council members who took part in the deliberations supported the proposals. However, the views of the two ministries remained apart on each measure, including the ideas of asking the services sector to independently set a reduction target and introducing an environment tax.

The government will invite public opinions on those proposals to reflect them in an outline of a set of global warming preventive measures.

The coordination of views will mostly likely encounter difficulties on independent action programs, under which each industry sector, including the manufacturing sector, independently sets its own carbon emissions target. The proposal calls for expanding the types of industry subject to this system. However, participants were skeptical about the efficacy of such a system, with one noting, "Since the system has no legal binding power, the proposal will have no effect" and another saying, "There is no alternative plan in the event of such a program fails."

Council members are also at odds over the environment tax issue. A participant from the industrial sector insisted, "The idea is out of the question, because it is against the trend of moving services from government to the private sector." Another participant rebutted, "It is necessary to look into the possibility of introducing an environment tax as a motivation for energy conservation as European countries do." A participant from the Environment Ministry called for establishing a deliberation forum for each ministry instead of holding joint deliberations.

19) Keizai Doyukai representative director Kitashiro holds his last regular press conference: "I have consistently supported structural reforms"

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 5) (Full)  
April 18, 2007

Recalling his four-year tenure, Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Doyukai) Representative Director Kakutaro Kitashiro, chairman of IBM Japan, during his last regular conference yesterday noted, "It was good that I have consistently expressed my support for structural reforms and that the economy has recovered as a result of efforts by private companies and the government."

As the most impressive event, he cited that when the government was discussing postal privatization, he contained the argument calling for putting off privatization, saying, "The building of a temporary computer system following the spin-off of Japan Post into four entities can be completed well in time." He said he has regrets about the slow progress in a revision of the "angel tax system,"

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aimed at nurturing venture capital firms, a leader of technical

innovation.

Kitashiro took office as representative director in April 2003. He has actively supported the structural reform policy of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who called for moving services from government to the private sector. He said he wants to focus on the education issue and the nurturing of venture capital firms, his lifework, after retirement.

Keizai Doyukai will select Masamitsu Sakurai, chairman of Rikoh as a new representative director.

SCHIEFFER